

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A method comprising:
- receiving a communication from a first communication device, the communication having associated therewith a first identifying information;
- authenticating a user of the first communication device; and
- replacing the first identifying information with second identifying information.
2. The method of claim 1 further comprising:
- retrieving the second identifying information as a function of an identity of the user as authenticated.
3. The method of claim 1 further comprising:
- receiving the second identifying information from the user via the first communication device.
4. The method of claim 3 further comprising:
- prompting the user to enter the second identifying information.
5. The method of claim 1 further comprising:
- providing to the user via the first communication device a plurality of predetermined sets of alternate identifying information; and
- receiving from the user a selection of one of the predetermined sets of alternate identifying information to use as the second identifying information.
6. The method of claim 1 wherein authenticating the user comprises:
- receiving from the user via the first communication device authentication data; and
- comparing the authentication data against a set of known-authentic data.
7. The method of claim 6 wherein the authentication data comprise a PIN.

1 8 The method of any of claims 1-7 further comprising:
2 connecting the communication to a second communication device; and
3 presenting the second identifying information to the second communication device.
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1 9. The method of any of claims 1-7 wherein:
2 the method is performed in a telephone network;
3 the first identifying information comprises caller ID information; and
4 the method further comprises,
5 connecting the communication to a second communication device, and
6 presenting the second identifying information to the second communication device.
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1 10. A method comprising:
2 receiving a communication from a first communication device;
3 authenticating a user of the first communication device;
4 pursuant to authentication of the user, selecting custom ID information;
5 connecting the communication from the first communication device to a second
6 communication device; and
7 delivering the custom ID information to the second communication device.
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1 11. The method of claim 10 further comprising:
2 receiving from the user a first input to override a first ID information associated with the first
3 communication device; and
4 the delivering of the custom ID information replaces the first ID information with the custom
5 ID information.
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1 12. The method of claim 10 wherein the authenticating of the user comprises:
2 receiving from the user a second input which the user has entered at the first communication
3 device; and
4 comparing the second input against a set of known-valid data.
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1 13. The method of claim 10 further comprising:

2 receiving from the user a third input to select the custom ID information from a plurality of
3 pre-determined data.

1 14. The method of claim 10 further comprising:
2 receiving the custom ID information from the user via the first communication device.

1 15. The method of any of claims 10-14 wherein the method is performed in a caller ID service of
2 a telephone network.

1 16. A method for use in a communication system which includes, coupled to a communication
2 network, a first communication device, a second communication device, and a custom ID service,
3 the method comprising the custom ID service:
4 receiving a communication from the first communication device via the communication
5 network;
6 receiving authentication data from the first communication device via the communication
7 network;
8 validating the authentication data;
9 connecting the communication to the second communication device via the communication
10 network; and
11 presenting custom ID information to the second communication device via the
12 communication network.

1 17. The method of claim 16 further comprising:
2 looking up the custom ID information as a function of the authentication data.

1 18. The method of claim 16 further comprising:
2 prompting the user to enter the custom ID information; and
3 receiving the custom ID information from the first communication device via the
4 communication network.

1 19. The method of claim 16 further comprising:

2 receiving from the first communication device via the communication network a selection of
3 one of a plurality of predetermined sets of custom ID information.

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1 20. The method of any of claims 16-19 wherein the communication network comprises a
2 telephone network and the custom ID service negotiates with the telephone network to cause the
3 telephone network to deliver the custom ID information as caller ID information.

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1 21. An apparatus for use with first and second communication devices, the apparatus comprising:
2 a plurality of communication interfaces through which the communication devices can
3 connect to the apparatus;

4 a communication routing mechanism, coupled to the plurality of communication interfaces,
5 for connecting the first communication device to the second communication device;

6 a global ID service, coupled to the communication routing mechanism, for delivering to the
7 second communication device data identifying the first communication device; and

8 a custom ID service, coupled to the global ID service, for providing custom ID information
9 for delivery to the second communication device.

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1 22. The apparatus of claim 21 wherein the custom ID service comprises:
2 means for authenticating a user of the first communication device.

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1 23. The apparatus of claim 22 wherein the custom ID service further comprises:
2 means for selecting the custom ID information in response to data identifying the
3 authenticated user.

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1 24. The apparatus of claim 22 wherein the custom ID service further comprises:
2 means for receiving the custom ID information from the user.

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1 25. The apparatus of claim 24 wherein the means for receiving the custom ID information
2 comprises:

3 means for prompting the user to select the custom ID information from a plurality of
4 predetermined sets of data; and

5 means for receiving a selection from the user.

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1 26. The apparatus of any claim 21-25 wherein the global ID service comprises a caller ID
2 mechanism and the custom ID information is presented in lieu of caller ID info which would
3 otherwise have been presented for the first communication device.
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1 27. An apparatus for use with a communication network having a communication routing
2 mechanism for connecting a communication from a first communication device to a second
3 communication device and having an ID service for providing to the second communication device
4 first ID information associated with the first communication device, the apparatus comprising:
5 means for coupling to the communication network to receive a communication from the first
6 communication device;
7 means for authorizing usage of the apparatus; and
8 means for providing custom ID information to the communication network for the
9 communication network to provide to the second communication device.
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1 28. The apparatus of claim 27 wherein the means for authorizing comprises:
2 means for receiving a first input data from the first communication device; and
3 means for comparing the first input data against a plurality of pre-validated data.
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1 29. The apparatus of claim 27 wherein the means for providing custom ID information
2 comprises:
3 means for looking up the custom ID information in response to data from the means for
4 authorizing.
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1 30. The apparatus of claim 27 wherein the means for providing custom ID information
2 comprises:
3 means for receiving the custom ID information from the first communication device.
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1 31. The apparatus of claim 27 wherein the means for providing custom ID information
2 comprises:
3 means for prompting a user of the first communication device to select the custom ID
4 information from a plurality of predetermined data; and

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means for receiving the user's selection.

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